

A N
Act of Common--Councill
 Of the City of *LONDON*,

(Made in the first and second years of the Reign of *Philip & Mary*)

F O R

Retrenching of the Expences
 O F T H E

Lord Mayor & Sheriffs. &c.

P U B L I S H E D

With Additional R E A S O N S for putting the
 said ACT in present Execution.

And now offered to the Consideration of all good
 Citizens, by some Well-wishers of the pre-
 sent and future Prosperity of the said City.

Presented to my Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs.



L O N D O N,

Printed for *Fr. Smith*, at the Elephant and Castle
 in *Cornhill*, near the Royal Exchange, 1680.



Anno primo & secundo PHILIPPO REGIS.



That this Court after the reading of a certain Bill devised and drawn for an Act concerning the Diet of the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs, and the Aldermen of this City for the time being, to be kept and observed at their Tables, the tenour whereof hereafter ensueth : It was read and agreed, enacted and accorded by Authority aforesaid, That the same Bill should be entred on Record, and the whole Contents and Articles thereof, and every of them be from henceforth duly observed, and put in execution, from time to time, according to the purport, true meaning and effect of the same.

By the Lord Mayor, his Brethren the Aldermen of the City of London, and Common-Council of the same.

FORASMUCH as the Testimony as well of divers and sundry good Ordinances, presented for the reformation of the great Excess in Fare, and other things, used and accustomed in Mayors and Sheriffs Houses; and at the Mayors Feasts of this honourable City of London, do evidently shew, and declare unto us that our ancient, wise and prudent Fore-fathers have many and often times attempted the redress and amendment of the same. And the great dearth of Victuals, and excessive Charges within these days doth abound, as is well known to all men, compelleth us now at this present to take Order therein. For as it hath, and doth plainly appear, the Charges of the Maioralty and Shrevalties are so huge and great, that almost all good Citizens flee, and refuse to serve in this honourable City, only because of the great Excess and Chargeable Fare and Diet used in the time of the said Offices.

For remedy whereof, and for the advancement of the Commonwealth, Be it therefore enacted by the Lord Mayor, and his Brethren the Aldermen, with the assent and consent of the Commons in this present Common-Council assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That from henceforth it shall not be lawful either for the Mayor or Sheriffs of this Honourable City that now are, or that hereafter shall bear and have the said Rooms and Offices, to be served at his or their several Tables in any of their Houses at Dinner, or at Supper, with any more Courses than one.

And that neither they, nor any of them, shall have at one time any more sundry Dishes of Meat at that one Course upon the Sunday, or other Festival days, being a Flesh-day, than Six, whether the same be hot or cold; and one or two of the same six Dishes to come to the Board as hot as a Reward, if they will, after the first three or five are served to the Board. And upon every Holy-day, being a Fish-day, at their said one Course, Seven divers Dishes of Meats, and not above. And at the same

one Course every Working day, being a Flesh-day, Five Dishes, and not above; and every Working-day, being a Fish-day, at their said one Course, Six Dishes of several Meats, and not above.

Provided always, and it is agreed, That neither Brawn, Collops with Eggs, Sallads, Potrage, Butter, Cheefe, Eggs, Herrings, Sprats, Shrimps, or any Shell-fish, nor no kind of Fruit unbaked, shall be accounted for any of the said number of Dishes of Meats above-mentioned. *Provided* also that the Lord Mayor of this City for the time being, may always, both Working-day and Holy-day, at his pleasure, have and be served at his said one Course with one Dish of Meat, either of Fish or Flesh, more than is before limited and appointed by this present Act and Ordinance, Any thing contained therein to the contrary notwithstanding.

Also, that it is agreed and enacted, That neither the Serjeants, nor other Officers of any Lord Mayor's House, nor the Serjeants, Yeomen, nor other Officers of the Sheriffs Houses for the time being, shall have at any time more sundry Dishes of Meat, either at Dinner or at Supper, upon the Flesh-days, but Three, whether the same be hot or cold; and upon the Fish-days to have Four sundry Dishes of Meats, and not above, whether the same be hot or cold. *Provided* always, and it is agreed, That neither Brawn, Sallads, nor any such-like meats as is afore excepted, shall be accounted for any of the said Dishes, for the Serjeants, Yeomen, or other Officers, Any thing in this said Act to the contrary notwithstanding.

Also it is further ordained and enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That none of the Aldermen, or Commoners of this City for the time being, shall at any time from henceforth exceed or pass the number of Dishes of Meats above limited and appointed for the Sheriffs as aforesaid, either at their Dinners or Suppers in their own proper Mansion Houses, Brawn, Sallads, and other like things as aforesaid excepted; nor in any of the Halls of Companies at any Feast or time; Nor that there be no Swan, Crane nor Bustard, which were wont to be called *Headpooles*, shall be spent at any Feast kept in any of the Halls of any Companies, upon the pain of forfeiture of every such offence *toties quoties*, Forty shillings.

And be it further enacted by Authority aforesaid, aswell for the ease and commodity of the Aged Persons, as also for the avoiding of the great unquietness that often happens at the said Feasts, from henceforth a certain convenient number of the Clothing, aswel of the principal Crafts, as of the meaner Companies, which were accustomed to dine at the Mayors Feast, shall be abated; And there shall remain to dine at the said Feast a certain number of every such Company as hath been accustomed to dine at the said Feast, the number whereof shall be yearly appointed by the Lord Mayor, and his Brethren the Aldermen of the said City for the time being; And shall be served at the said Feast but with one Course, and but Six Dishes in the said Course for one Mess, besides the Brawn, if it be on a Flesh day; And if it fall on a Fish-day, then to have Seven Dishes at a Mess, besides Butter, Eggs, and such like, as is above recited and declared. *Provided* always, that when it shall happen any Ambassador, or any of the Privy Council to be at the said Feast, that then for their Board only, to be amended and ordered by the discretion of the said Mayor and Sheriffs for that time being; And no Banquet after Dinner to be had, except *Ipocras* and *Wafers*, as in time past hath been used.

And

And the Festival-days that were wont to be kept by the Mayors and Sheriffs in their several Houses ; that is to say, the three Holy-days after Whitsontide, and the Dinners kept at *Bartholomew-tide* from henceforth to be left, and laid down by the said Mayor and Sheriffs. And the Feasts of *Christmas* and *Easter*, with the Holy-days next after, to be used and kept by the said Mayor and Sheriffs, as heretofore hath been accustomed, and to keep the Order as is aforesaid.

It is also ordered and enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the Sheriffs of this City for the time being, from henceforth shall have but Fourteen Serjeants, and Fourteen Yeomen apiece. Provided always, that all such Serjeants and Yeomen as now are in Office, shall still remain in the same, except by Death, or by some other just occasion or offence, they shall be removed out of any of the said Offices, Any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

And it is also by the said Authority enacted, That the said Sheriffs of this Honourable City for the time being, shall from henceforth give to every of their Serjeants and Yeoman two Gowns at the times accustomed, and no other Liveries ; And to every other Clerks of the Compters, and such as have been accustomed to have had Gowns at *Christmas*, to have only one Livery-Gown, and no more.

And it is further ordained, That from henceforth there shall no Wyth be set home neither at the Mayors nor Sheriffs Houses ; Neither shall they keep any Lord of Misrule in any of their said Houses.

And it is further established and agreed by this Common-Council, That every of the Aldermen that shall at any time hereafter go about to excuse or discharge any of his said Brethren, or other person or persons aforesaid, of his or their default or offence, committed or done contrary to the tenour and true meaning of this present Act, shall forfeit and lose for every such time of his or their so doing, Forty shillings ; so that it be duly proved before the said Mayor and Court of Aldermen for the time being.

And that all and every the Penalties aforesaid to be forfeited, shall be forthwith, upon the tryal thereof, be laid down, and paid in the inner Chamber of *Guild-hall* before a Court of Aldermen : The one moiety of every such Forfeiture to be to him or them that shall present the same, and the other moiety to be distributed towards the sustentation of Christ's Hospital.

Item, Forasmuch as the Lord-Mayor and Sheriffs of this City for the time being, shortly after their first entry into their said several Offices and Rooms, be yearly at great and exceeding Expences and Charges, for and by reason of the great and sumptuous Feast, which they for the Honour and Renown of the same, do keep and make in the *Guild-hall*, called the Mayor and Sheriffs Feast, aswell to and for such Noblemen of the King and Queens most Honourable Council, Ambassadors of Foreign Reulms and Potentates as are bidden and desired to vouchsafe to come unto the same ; as also to and for the Aldermen and Worshipful Commons and Citizens of the same City : Be it therefore also ordained, enacted and established by the Authority aforesaid, That the said Lord-Mayor and Sheriffs for the time being, shall yearly from henceforth at the time of the making of their said Feast, have of the Free-gift of the said City, out of the Chamber of the same City, of the Common Store and Treasure of the

said City there, towards the relief of their said Charges, and Expenses of the said Feast, the sum of One hundred Pounds of current Money of England. And that this present Act shall be a sufficient Warrant and Discharge unto the Chamberlain of the said City for the time being, for the yearly payment of the same Sum of One hundred Pounds accordingly.

READER,

AS by this Act you may observe, that our Predecessors taking notice that the Extravagancies of Mayors and Sheriffs caused (as they say) almost all good Citizens to flie and refuse the service; so to prevent that Mischief in the future, they limited them in their living to the Method directed by this Act. And if when little was spent besides the growth of our own Country, Beer and Ale being then their drink, they thought it their Wisdom to set bounds to Luxurious Profaneness, there is much more reason for it now, when Debauchery is come to that height, that the fifth part of the Charge of a Shrievalty is in Wine, the growth of another Country. And when Feasts, hardly heard of in former times, are risen to that Excess, as would be scandalous to mention, as those called the *Chequer* and *Spittle Feasts*, the first colling in Wine betwixt Seventy and Eighty Pounds; and the latter, after the pretended Service of God in hearing a Sermon, costs above Three Hundred Pounds to each Sheriff. And though much after this rate is the rest of the Year spent, yet when the Example of this Act is urged for laying aside these sinful Feasts, and reducing the rest unto this Pattern, which is a wholesome Law, some who should see to the putting it in execution, will not hear of it; and possibly because they would have others be as profuse as themselves have been, though there are these Reasons for a Reformation herein.

I.

Because nothing can tend more to the Advancement of any City or Country than the having wise and good Magistrates; And that so long as the great expence of Shrievalties continue, the City must, as this Act suggests, have an eye to Wealth, more than Parts or Vertue, in the Choice of their Sheriffs; and that such as their Sheriffs are, such will the Court of Aldermen be: And therefore as necessary for the good Government of this great City, the charge of Shrievalties ought to be reduced to such an Order and Method, as may be an Encouragement to Men of more Honesty than Riches to serve the Place.

II.

No Man hath reason to be expensive in his Shrievalty; because though the Court of Aldermen hath a Rule for supplying, as any die, their vacant places out of those that have served Sheriffs, yet they make their Election to depend upon the uncertain humour of their Court, thereby frustrating when they please all Compensation for the Expence and drudgery of a Shrievalty, as lately appeared in their Choice of Sir *Simon Lewis*, one of their present Sheriffs, rejecting Sir *Thomas Stamp*, who had served the Place several years before with good approbation, and was presented to them by the Ward he lives in as a deserving Person. And whereas each

Ward

Ward when they want an Alderman, do present two Commoners to the Court, for them to chuse one, the Ward of *Bassisham*, to the end that Sir *Thomas* might unavoidably be chosen, joyned the younger (and not the elder) Sheriff with him, not thinking that an old Sheriff would be balked, to chuse one that had not served his Year; and yet notwithstanding, the Court by their Prerogative passed by Sir *Thomas*, to the disappointing of the Ward that sent him. And this Example is I suppose a good reason for Sheriffs in the future not to spend more in their Shrievalties than is necessary, when their Reward is so uncertain.

III.

Because as the Wisdom of the Nation did by Act of Parliament prohibit the profuse Hospitality of the Sheriffs in the Counties; so there can be no reason assigned why the Sheriffs of *London* and *Middlesex* should not voluntarily observe the Prudence of that Prohibition as well as other Counties; or why the Citizens of *London* should not exercise the same discretion as the Gentry (at this time) do in many Counties, where, by an Agreement among themselves, they have retrenched the Charge of Shrievalties.

IIII.

It is against common Sense and Reason that a Ministerial Officer in this City, contrary to the Rules of all other Countries, should in a way of Servitude waste his Estate, when the expending of his strength and time in a faithful discharge of his duty is all that can be incumbent upon him, or can be justly expected from him.

V.

If great Hospitality, or rather a luxurious way of living, be for the Honour of the City, as some do vainly pretend, the Charges ought in Justice to be born by them for whose Honour it is, and not by persons who do not seek or desire the Employment, but have it imposed upon them. And by common consent and usage of all other Countries, an extravagant way of living is not accounted the Honour of a Nation: for if it were, we should find it more practised by Princes than it is; and if it be not used by Supream Magistrates, mere Ministerial Officers have much less cause to do it.

VI.

That the management of this Expence is in a rude and disagreeable way to any sober person, a great part of it being spent in Popular Feasts, where the Ravenous Attendants and their Rabble Acquaintance, are like so many Beasts of Prey; and all the Year after, such of them as are made use of, do from pretended Custom, command that which they call their due in the Sheriffs Houses, as if they were their Masters, and not they theirs, a thing odious to all good Men, and ought to be reformed.

VII.

That the Debauchery in this Expence is a sin before God, and were it known, would be a scandal in the sight of Man; as appears, in that of Three thousand Pounds Expence in all manner of ways, above Five hundred Pounds is in Wine; when a Lord, or Gentleman, that formerly lived at the rate of Ten or Twelve thousand Pounds *per Annum*, did or, as is well known (but thirty years ago) spend an hundred Pounds in Wine.

VIII.

It seems inconsistent with Right Reason, and Common Sense, that one who is but the Lord-Mayors Servant, attending upon him every day, and at most but a Publick Ministerial Officer, and no Magistrate, should be at so great a Charge, especially when he can have no other Prospect, than a present serving his Generation with the toyl and expence of his strength and time.

It is said of *Philip* the second K. of *Spain*, that as a means to subdue the *Netherlands*, by reducing them to Poverty, and so to depend upon him, he provoked the Chief of them, by the Example of his Governours high and splendid living (to whom to that end he gave extraordinary Allowances) to live above their Estates: But since we are happy in a King, that doth not the like to us by such Example, it will be no Credit to this City to have it recorded in Story, that the Ruine of it proceeded from themselves, in a voluntary suffering an Extravagancy, which by the Example of this last Year, seems to be growing; and therefore it may be with'd, before it be too late, that the mischief hereof may be prevented, in retrenching the Charge of Sheriffs, by laying aside all great Feasts, save that of the Lord Mayors Day, (and yet that any part of that Charge should be born by the Sheriffs, who are but Servants in it, is against equal Justice.)

IX.

Because should not the Mayors Feast be reduced to the Rule of this Act, the City is obliged in Justice to pay all Exceedings. For since the Law judging the whole Charge, as it is thereby stated, to be too much for the Mayor and Sheriffs to bear, do allow them an hundred Pounds towards it; It doth consequently grant, that if the Rule be transgressed, the City ought to bear the Charge: for it is not to be supposed that the Mayor and Sheriffs will voluntarily break a penal Statute, thereby to put themselves (besides the Penalty of this Law) to extraordinary Expences.

X.

As all Men in Government ought as well to provide against future as present Mischiefs; so though so long as it shall please God to bless unto us our present King, we need not fear the Corrupting of Sheriffs; yet not having an infallible assurance of Vertuous Successors, it may hereafter fall out that if the Charge of Shrievalties be not retrenched, that so honest Men may be encouraged to hold, Men of Corrupt Principles may undertake the Service, in design to give up Themselves and the Liberties of the City to the Bribing Bounty of future Princes.

F I N I S.